

Message Text

SECRET

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16

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DODE-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 EUR-10 L-02 DRC-01 EB-03

AID-10 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SP-02 PRS-01 H-01 AF-04 NEA-06

IO-03 /094 W

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P 300405Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1288

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIETIANNE

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 3951

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TAG AND SUBJ. LINE

BANGKOK FOR ABRAMOWITZ - SECRETARY CLEMENTS PARTY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SN, XC, TH, VS

SUBJ: DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS MEETING WITH LEE KUAN YEW

SUMMARY: IN LENGTHY MEETING WITH DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS,

LEE EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER PROSPECT THAT INDO-

CHINA WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY COMMUNISTS BY 1977 AND

THAT U.S. WOULD LOSE INTEREST IN REGION. THAILAND

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WOULD THEN COME TO TERMS WITH CHINA AN SEA WOULD

BECOME A CONTESTED AREA BETWEEN SOVIETS AND PRC.
LEE SAID IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT U.S. ACT TO RESTORE
CONFIDENCE AND THAT IT HAVE NERVE, WILL AND MEANS TO
PLAY EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE REGION. DEPSEC CLEMENTS
ASSURED LEE U.S WAS NOT GOING TO ABANDON INDOCHINA.
LEE ENDORSED U.S. PLANS FOR DIEGO GARCIA AND SAID
INCREASED NAVAL VISITS TO SINGAPORE WOULD BE WELCOME.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN COURSE TWO HOUR COVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER
LEE SEPT 28, DEPSECDEF CSLEMENTS ASKED LEE WHAT HE
THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.
THE PM SAID HE WAS RECONCILED TO LIKELIHOOD THAT
INDOCHINA WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE COMMUNISTS BY 1977.
HE SAID WEAKENED SUPPORT OF THE U.S. WOULD UNDERMINE
THE WILL TO RESIST AND HE DIDN'T SEE PROSEPECT FOR
VIETNAM ECONOMY DEVELOPING FAST ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN
COUNTRY. TAIS WOULD FEAR RETRIBUTION FROM NORTH
VIETNAM FOR HAVING PROVIDED BASES TO THE U.S. AND
WITHIN FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS WOULD LIKELY TRY TO COME
TO TERMS WITH CHINA FOR PROTECTION. HE REFERRED
TO RECENT CUT IN AID REQUEST FOR INDOCHINA AND
SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT CONGRESS IS TIRED OF
PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM. HE MENTIONED RECENT
STATEMENT BY GENERAL MURRAY TO THE EFFECT THAT
SOUTH VIETNAM COULD NOT GET ITS ECONOMY GOING WITHOUT
THE CONTINUATION OF SUBSTANTIAL U.S. AID. THIS
STATEMENT, LEE SAID, WAS PROBABLY REALISTIC AND
ADDED TO HIS DISCOURAGEMENT ABOUT VIETNAM'S PROSPECTS.
SOMETHING HAD TO HAPPEN TO REVERSE THE CURRENT TREND
BY 1977 BY WHICH TIME IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE. IT
IS UNREALISTIC TO ASSUME THAT THE ASEAN POWERS, WITH
INDONESIA AS A BASE, WOULD PROVIDE A COUNTERWEIGHT
TO THE COMMUNISTS. IF THE U.S. LOSES INTEREST IN THE
REGION, THEN IT WILL BECOME A CONTEST BETWEEN
THE RUSSIANS AND THE PRC. WE DON'T WANT THEM, HE
SAID, TO BRING THEIR CONFLICT INTO
THIS AREA. IF CONGRESS COULD REGAIN ITS
PERSPECTIVE, HE CONTINUED, MAYBE THE SITUATION CAN BE
SAVED, BUT ONCE CONFIDENCE IN THE U.S. IS GONE, IT
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IS THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

2. AT THE TIME OF THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS, WHICH LEE
CALLED A MASTER STROKE, HE THOUGHT THERE WAS A 50-
50 CHANCE FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM. THEN, HE SAID,
WATERGATE CAME ALONG AND THE TIDE TURNED. THE SITUATION
IN THAILAND DETERIORATED, THE BOMBING WAS HALTED AND
PEOPLE IN THE REGION BEGAN TO LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE

UNITED STATES. THE ESSENTIAL PROBLEM IS TO RESTORE
CONFIDENCE AND TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE STILL HAVE THE
NERVE, WILL AND WHEREWITHAL TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE
IN THE REGION.

3. SECRETARY CLEMENTS REFERRED TO THE CUT IN THE AID
APPROPRIATION FOR INDOCHINA FROM \$1.4 BILLION TO \$700
MILLION AND ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE ADMINISTRATION
WOULD SEEK A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION EARLY NEXT YEAR.
HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THIS WOULD BE APPROVED. HE ASSURED
LEE THAT "WE ARE NOT GOING TO ABANDON INDOCHINA AND ARE
GOING TO TRY TO FULFILL OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN SEA."

4. LEE SAID THAT THE PRC AND RUSSIA ARE GOING TO
CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE REGION. THERE MUST BE, HE
SAID, A COUNTERVAILING FORCE WHICH CAN ONLY BE THE U.S.
SECURITY OF THE ENTIRE REGION DEPENDS, LEE SAID, ON A
CONTINUING AMERICAN INTEREST AND VISIBLE PRESENCE AND
THAT PRESENCE MUST BE CREDIBLE. HE REFERRED TO OUR
DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR DIEGO GARCIA AND SAID THIS WAS
ESSENTIAL IF OUR INDIAN OCEAN POSITION WAS TO BE STABLE
AND CREDIBLE. HE SECRETARY TOLD LEE THAT WE INTEND TO
GO AHEAD WITH OUR PLANS FOR DIEGO GARCIA. LEE SAID HE
WAS GLAD TO HEAR THIS.

5. THE SECRETARY THANKED THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE
HOSPITALITY OF THE PORT EXTENDED TO VISITING U.S. NAVAL
VESSELS AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE
TO BE WELCOMED. HE SAID IT WAS POSSIBLE, GIVEN DEVELOP-
MENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, THAT THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH
VISITS MIGHT INCREASE. LEE SAID THAT THEY WOULD, OF
COURSE, BE WELCOME IN SINGAPORE.

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To: STATE
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